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# 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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## Nuclear disarmament: France's practical commitment

### Working paper submitted by France

> *[...] to seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all*
> (United Nations Security Council resolution 1887 (2009))

In accordance with the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regarding nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament, which it has endorsed, France is actively committed to disarmament.

In order to move towards a safer world, France has adopted a practical and global approach to disarmament:

- Practical, in the sense that actions speak louder than words. France is showing the way: it has taken unprecedented unilateral measures and developed ambitious and practical measures for the vigorous pursuit of disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, at the international level.
- Global, in the sense that improving the international security situation calls for not only progress on nuclear disarmament, but also on conventional disarmament, as well as for the universalization of the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, and the need to take into account ballistic missile proliferation and security in space.

## I. Action taken by France

**Cessation of production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons**

Cessation of plutonium production in 1992, and of highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons in 1996.

Respect for a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

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France is the only State to have decided to shut down and dismantle its facilities for the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

**Enhancing strategic stability and building confidence**

None of our weapons are targeted. This "de-targeting" measure was announced in 1997 and has been consistently reaffirmed ever since.

Reduction of the alert status of the two nuclear components announced in 1992 and 1996.

France is the first and only State to date to have made public its total number of nuclear weapons: fewer than 300. France has no nuclear weapons in reserve.

The only nuclear-weapon State, along with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to give pre-launch notifications of all its ballistic missile and space launches, within the framework of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

The only State to have granted international experts unfettered access to its former facilities for the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons (visits organized in 2008 and 2009).

**Definitive ban on nuclear testing**

Definitive cessation of nuclear testing announced in 1996.

France was the first nuclear-weapon State, together with the United Kingdom, to have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 and ratified it in 1998.

The only nuclear-weapon State to have dismantled, in a transparent manner open to international scrutiny, its nuclear test site in the Pacific (the Pacific testing centre). In 1996-1998, an international mission of experts conducted a visit to the site to assess the impact of France's tests on the environment.

Support for the CTBT verification regime: France manages 24 monitoring stations.

**Reduction of stockpiles to a level of strict sufficiency**

As the President of the French Republic recalled in his 21 March 2008 speech in Cherbourg, France has always made sure that its nuclear stockpile is kept at the lowest possible level compatible with the strategic context, in accordance with the principle of strict sufficiency.

As a result of changes in the strategic context, in particular since the end of the cold war, all components of French forces have been scaled down: France thus cut its nuclear arsenal by half over a period of nearly 10 years.

- The ground-to-ground component: the only State to have completely dismantled its ground-to-ground nuclear component
- The naval component: the only State to have voluntarily reduced the number of its missile-launching nuclear submarines in service by one third

- The airborne component: reduction announced by the President of the French Republic in 2008 of one third of the number of nuclear weapons, missiles and aircraft in the airborne component.

## II. Action taken by France in figures

- 300 nuclear warheads: this is the cap on the total number of weapons announced by the President of the French Republic on 21 March 2008. France is the only nuclear-weapon State to have made its total nuclear stockpile public.
- 50 per cent: France has reduced its nuclear arsenal by half in nearly 10 years.
- Zero: France no longer has any nuclear testing facilities or facilities producing fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

## III. What France and its European partners propose

France's firm commitment to disarmament at the national level is being translated into ambitious initiatives at the international level. It would like all the nuclear powers to make a firm commitment to emulating its approach, based on a posture of strict sufficiency in nuclear arsenals.

On the basis of the proposals made by the President of France in his 21 March 2008 address in Cherbourg, France, together with its European partners, presented a disarmament plan of action which was endorsed by the European Union's 27 Heads of State and Government in December 2008, covering:

- Universal ratification of the CTBT and completion of its verification regime, and dismantling, as soon as possible, of all nuclear testing facilities, in a manner that is transparent and open to the international community
- Immediate opening, without preconditions, of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and observance of an immediate moratorium on the production of such materials, and the dismantling of dedicated production facilities
- Development of confidence-building and transparency measures by the nuclear Powers
- Conclusion by the United States of America and the Russian Federation of a legally binding post-START arrangement, and overall reduction of global nuclear-weapon stockpiles pursuant to article VI of the NPT, in particular by the States with the biggest arsenals
- Inclusion of tactical nuclear weapons, by those States that have them, in general arms control and disarmament processes, with a view to their reduction and elimination
- Opening of consultations on a treaty banning short- and intermediate-range ground-to-ground missiles
- Universal subscription to and implementation of The Hague Code of Conduct
- Mobilization in all other areas of disarmament.